



Press Advisory

Following are some Agency developments which may interest you. If you need more information on any of these subjects, call the appropriate contact.

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EPA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ENHANCEMENT AND TIME EXTENSION FOR Bt CORN AND Bt COTTON PLANT-PESTICIDES REGISTRATIONS

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EPA published on August 9, a Federal Register notice announcing that the Agency is undertaking a comprehensive scientific and public review of the current registrations for genetically engineered corn and cotton, commonly referred to as Bt corn and Bt cotton. The Agency is also announcing extension of the existing registrations of Bt cotton and Bt corn plant-pesticides until September 30, 2001, in order to allow ample time for this comprehensive review. Moreover, as part of the Clinton-Gore Administration's ongoing efforts to protect public health and the environment, EPA is using this comprehensive approach to ensure that decisions are based on the best available scientific analysis, and that opportunity is provided for an open dialogue with the public regarding Bt products. Toward this end, the Agency is publishing our risk assessment for public comment and seeking scientific peer review of this assessment by the Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP). In addition to seeking advice from the SAP, EPA will receive recommendations from an Administration-wide biotechnology review that is led jointly by the Council on Environmental Quality and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. The Federal Register notice also initiates the public participation process that will enable the Agency to incorporate broad public input in the process of regulating Bt products. EPA is also engaged in a number of activities that will help the Agency strengthen its science and provide guidance on regulating pesticide products produced through biotechnology. Various documents are available from EPA's Biopesticides Internet site at: www.epa.gov/pesticides/biopesticides and from EPA's Scientific Advisory Panel Home Page at www.epa.gov/scipoly/sap. The Federal Register is available at: www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/.

SCIENCE PANEL TO REVIEW THE POTENTIAL OF MALATHION'S LINK TO CANCER IN HUMANS

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The Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) will hold a meeting August 17 and 18 to review the findings that malathion may be linked to cancer in humans. According to the EPA Preliminary Draft, July 1999 "Guidelines for Carcinogen Risk Assessment," EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) has proposed to classify malathion as having "suggestive evidence of carcinogenicity but not sufficient to assess human carcinogenic potential" by all routes of exposure. The meeting will be at the Holiday Inn at Ballston, 4610 North Fairfax Drive, Arlington, Va., from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the Thursday, Aug. 17 and from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 18. The agenda and background document for the meeting are available at: www.epa.gov/scipoly/sap/ or by calling the OPP Docket at 703-305-5805. To participate in the meeting contact Paul Lewis, EPA's Office of Science Coordination and Policy, by calling 703-305-5369 or sending the request by fax to 703-605-0656 or an email to lewis.paul@epa.gov.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED FOR THE SAFE USE OF PESTICIDES

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EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that formalizes the process by which the two agencies collaborate on implementing the public health provisions of the Food Quality Protection Act of 1996. The MOU establishes a broad framework and working relationship for coordinating on-going activities between the Agencies. These activities include carrying out particular goals such as developing and implementing programs to improve and facilitate the safe use of methods necessary to combat and control pests of public health concern. The memorandum designates liaisons in both agencies and establishes a process for regular consultation and information sharing. Other goals include ensuring the continued availability of effective minor use public health pesticide products and ensuring that regulatory decisions regarding public health pesticides are based upon sound science and expert consultation. The MOU will be available at: http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/cb/csb_page/updates/epacdc-mou.

FEDERAL AGENCIES UNITE TO HELP TRIBES SOLVE SOLID WASTE PROBLEMS

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Nearly a dozen federal agencies are joining forces to help tribes close high threat open dump sites around the country. At a signing ceremony on Friday, Aug. 11, these federal agencies will formalize an agreement to provide additional assistance to tribes with the closure or upgrade of their high threat open dumps. Since 1999, a multi-agency tribal solid waste task force has provided \$4.1 million to 18 tribes to assist with the closure or upgrade of their high threat open dumps. The signing ceremony is being held at noon, Aug. 11, in room 2168 at the Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, D.C. Many tribal representatives, who are in town for a Tribal Association on Solid Waste and Emergency Response conference, are expected to attend this landmark event. The Memorandum of Understanding is being signed by EPA, Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs, Health and Human Service's Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service, Department of Defense and Housing and Urban Development. For more information on open dumps on Indian lands or to obtain a grant solicitation package, visit: www.epa.gov/tribalmsw or contact: Beverly Goldblatt at 703-308-7278 or Melanie Garvey at 202-564-2579.

EXPANDED TOXICS RELEASE INVENTORY STATE INFORMATION NOW AVAILABLE

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Today, EPA released a state-by-state analysis of the 1998 Toxics Release Inventory (TRI), an addendum to the report released on May 11. This report, entitled the "1998 Toxics Release Inventory State Fact Sheets," provides a more thorough analysis of each state's data for the manufacturing industries, the original industries monitored over 11 years (1988-98), and the seven newly included major industrial sectors. These seven new industry sectors are electric utilities, coal mining, metal mining, chemical wholesalers, petroleum bulk plants and terminals, solvent recovery and hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal. The TRI program requires companies to report quantities of toxic chemicals that their facilities annually release into the air, water and land. EPA provides this type of yearly analysis as a snapshot of each state's releases. Many states implement pollution prevention or toxic use reduction laws using TRI data as the framework for environmental accounting. Another 1998 TRI addendum report dealing with details on a national level, "Toxics Release Inventory Public Data Release," will be released in a few weeks. The state fact sheets are now available at: <http://www.epa.gov/tri/tri98>

ENFORCEMENT WRAP-UP

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FLORIDA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CFC SMUGGLING

Burt A. Ammons, of Stuart, Fla., pleaded guilty on Aug. 1, in the U.S. District Court in Miami, Fla., for attempting to unlawfully import the refrigerant CFC-12 into the United States in violation of the Clean Air Act. On May 4, Ammons and co-defendant Hugh A. Robinson attempted to smuggle approximately ninety 30-pound cylinders of CFC-12 into the United States in false compartments aboard the motor vessel Sierra. The illegal cargo was discovered when the boat was stopped and inspected by the city of Fort Lauderdale Marine Patrol Unit for running without navigation lights. The CFC-12 was to be unlawfully sold to local auto repair shops in the Palm Beach and St. Lucie County areas. The importation of CFC-12 is highly restricted, because when it is released into the environment, CFC-12 damages the earth's ozone layer which protects people from ultraviolet radiation that can cause skin cancer and cataracts. When sentenced, Ammons and Robinson, who previously pleaded guilty, each faces up to five years in prison and/or a fine up to \$250,000. The case was investigated by EPA's Criminal Investigation Division and the U.S. Customs Service, and is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Fla., in Miami.

FOUR CONVICTED IN LOUISIANA METHYL BROMIDE CASE THAT KILLED MOTHER AND SICKENED CHILD

Amtek of La. Inc., and its president Robert Case, both of Baton Rouge, La., and Sims Brothers Construction Inc. and its site superintendent, Mark Jerkins, both of Pensacola, Fla., were convicted on July 31, in the U.S. District Court in Baton Rouge for violating the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. In May 1997, Sims Brothers hired Amtek to demolish buildings on a construction site in Baton Rouge. During the demolition, two 200-pound cylinders marked "poison," containing the highly poisonous rodenticide methyl bromide, were found at the site. Case and Jerkins removed the cylinders from the building and then stored them in an open area at the construction site. An Amtek employee removed the cylinders believing that they contained butane or propane and gave them to his cousin Edith Rome in Albany, La. to be stored in her home. Ms. Rome, 32 years of age, died of methyl bromide poisoning from leaky valve. Her son Christopher became seriously ill and required emergency medical treatment. The case was investigated by EPA's Criminal Investigation Division, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture with assistance from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality and the La. State Police. It was prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Middle District in Baton Rouge.

EPA AND NEW YORK CITY SETTLE LAWSUIT TO ADDRESS AIR VIOLATIONS

The City of New York and the New York City Department of Sanitation have agreed to pay \$1 million to settle claims that the city knowingly released ozone-depleting substances such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) into the environment when disposing of household appliances. In addition, New York City will spend \$3 million on supplemental environmental projects to benefit its environment. The city was cited for collecting discarded appliances from New York City residents in vehicles that compact or crush the appliances without first removing refrigerants which contain ozone-depleting substances or verifying that refrigerants were previously removed from the appliances. The release of ozone-depleting substances into the atmosphere can increase human exposure to ultraviolet radiation, which is a cause of skin cancer and cataracts. For further details on this case, visit: <http://www.epa.gov/region02> or contact Mary Mears at 212-637-3669.